

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for making a rock laminate, the method comprising:

 providing a rock having an exposed surface;

 applying a polymer to at least a portion of the exposed surface of the rock such that a portion of the exposed surface is bonded to the polymer; and

 lifting a portion of the polymer, along with the corresponding bonded portion of the exposed surface, away from the rock to produce the rock laminate and to expose a new surface of the rock, wherein the rock laminate is flexible.
2. (Original) The method of Claim 1, further comprising:

 providing the rock having the new surface;

 applying a polymer to at least a portion of the new surface of the rock such that a portion of the new surface is bonded to the polymer; and

 lifting a portion of the polymer, along with the corresponding bonded portion of the new surface, away from the rock to produce a second rock laminate and to expose a second new surface of the rock.

3. (Canceled)

4. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim [[3]] 1, wherein lifting a portion of the polymer includes rolling the rock laminate away from the rock to expose the new surface.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim [[3]] 1, further comprising:

flexing the rock laminate until a desired shape is acquired.

6. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim [[3]] 1, further comprising:

molding the rock laminate around an object.

7. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim [[3]] 1, further comprising:

heating the rock laminate until the rock laminate exhibits a desired flexibility.

8. (Original) The method of Claim 1, further comprising:

curing the polymer after application of the polymer to the exposed surface of the rock.

9. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 8, wherein ~~said step of curing occurs after said step of~~ lifting a portion of the polymer, along with the corresponding bonded portion of the exposed surface, away from the rock.

10. (Original) The method of Claim 8, further comprising:

increasing the rate of the curing of the polymer via application of a curing technique.

11. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein applying a polymer to at least a portion of the exposed surface includes use of a mold.
12. (Original) The method of Claim 1, further comprising:
applying an additive to the polymer.
13. (Original) The method of Claim 1, further comprising:
applying a sealer to a rock side of the rock laminate.
14. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the rock is a metamorphic rock.
15. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the rock is a sedimentary rock.
16. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the rock is selected from the group consisting of shale, limestone, sandstone, mudstone, slate, quartzite, phyllite, mica schist, chlorite schist, gneiss, talc schist, glaucophane schist, prasinite, epidote amphibolite, amphibolite, embrechite, agmatite, calc schist and mylonite.
17. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the rock provided is in situ.
18. (Withdrawn) A rock laminate produced according to the method of Claim 1.
19. (Withdrawn) A rock laminate comprising:

a layer of rock, wherein

the layer of rock has a surface,

the layer of rock has a plurality of pores defined by
small openings in the surface of the rock, the
plurality of pores operable to receive a fluid;
and

a flexible layer, wherein

the flexible layer is positioned above at least a
portion of the surface of the layer of rock and
in at least a portion of the plurality of pores
of the layer of rock, and

the portion of the flexible layer positioned in at
least a portion of the plurality of pores of the
layer of rock is received by the plurality of
pores as a fluid.

20. (Withdrawn) The rock laminate of Claim 19, wherein the
layer of rock has a thickness that is 4 mm or less.

21. (Withdrawn) The rock laminate of Claim 20, wherein the
layer of rock has a thickness that is 2 mm or less.

22. (Withdrawn) The rock laminate of Claim 19, wherein the
flexible layer is made of an organic polymer.

23. (Withdrawn) The rock laminate of Claim 19, wherein the
flexible layer includes an additive, operable to enhance the
characteristics of the flexible layer.

24. (Withdrawn) The rock laminate of Claim 19, wherein a rock
side of the rock laminate includes a sealant.

25. (Withdrawn) The rock laminate of Claim 19, wherein the layer of rock is delaminated from a rock via an initial bonding of the flexible layer to a surface of the rock, the delamination of the flexible layer along with the surface of the rock forms the rock laminate.

26. (Withdrawn) A method for producing a rock slab having a desired thickness, the method comprising:

providing a rock having an exposed surface and an initial thickness;

applying a polymer to at least a portion of the exposed surface of the rock such that a portion of the exposed surface of the rock is bonded to the polymer; and

lifting a portion of the polymer, along with the corresponding bonded portion of the exposed surface, away from the rock to produce the rock slab with the desired thickness, the desired thickness being less than the initial thickness.

27. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 26, wherein applying the polymer and lifting the portion of the polymer is repeated a plurality of times to produce the rock slab with the desired thickness.

28. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 26, wherein the initial thickness of the rock is in the range of 1/2 to 2 inches, and the desired thickness of the rock slab is in the range of 1/8 to 3/8 inch.

29. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 26, further comprising:

bonding a substrate to the rock slab to form a composite.

30. (New) A method for creating a flexible metamorphic rock laminate, the method comprising:

providing a metamorphic rock with a first surface;

positioning a polymer on at least a portion of the first surface of the metamorphic rock such that a portion of the first surface of the metamorphic rock adheres to the polymer; and

delaminating at least a portion of the polymer, along with the corresponding bonded portion of the first surface, away from the metamorphic rock to produce the flexible metamorphic rock laminate, which includes the metamorphic rock portion and the polymer, and to expose a new surface of the metamorphic rock.

31. (New) The method of Claim 30, further comprising:

applying a color additive to the polymer.

32. (New) The method of Claim 30, further comprising:

applying a filler to the polymer before positioning the polymer on at least the portion of the first surface of the metamorphic rock.

33. (New) The method of Claim 30, further comprising:

applying a sealer to a rock side of the flexible metamorphic rock laminate.

34. (New) The method of Claim 30, wherein the metamorphic rock is provided in situ in a quarry.

35. (New) The method of Claim 30, wherein the flexible metamorphic rock laminate has a first side that includes the metamorphic rock portion and a second side that includes the polymer, wherein the flexible metamorphic rock laminate is provided at a thickness that allows at least a portion of the polymer to affect the appearance of the first side of the flexible metamorphic rock laminate.

36. (New) The method of Claim 30, wherein the flexible metamorphic rock laminate has a thickness that is at least 1/12 mm and not more than 2 mm.

37. (New) The method of Claim 30, wherein the metamorphic rock portion of the flexible metamorphic rock laminate has a thickness that is not more than 1 mm.